

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 43

By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Arthur Byron "Deacon" Bowers for laudable service to the veterans of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who through their extraordinary efforts have distinguished themselves as passionate and dedicated servants of our veterans; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy citizen is Arthur Byron "Deacon" Bowers, a resident of Carter County, whose passion for the military began early in life and has been manifested in his extraordinary and noteworthy career in veterans' affairs; and

WHEREAS, at age 12, Arthur "Deacon" Bowers, so nicknamed after an older brother who was killed in a motorcycle accident, enlisted in Company F of the Tennessee National Guard in Elizabethton; he was discharged when it was discovered he was underage; and

WHEREAS, six months later, Mr. Bowers enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and completed basic training; again, he was discharged when his age was revealed; and

WHEREAS, in his characteristically persistent manner, Arthur "Deacon" Bowers enlisted again, this time in the United States Army; at age 15, he was sent to Korea to join American

forces as an infantryman with the 25<sup>th</sup> Division, 35<sup>th</sup> Regiment; he served with great valor and ability until he was granted an honorable discharge on April 17, 1953; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Bowers began serving his fellow veterans in 1968 as an Employment Representative for the Upper East Tennessee Human Development Agency, the forerunner of the present Labor and Workforce Development organization; and

WHEREAS, since 1974, he has served with uncommon devotion and exceptional zeal as Regional Veterans Employment Representative, working out of the Veterans Administration facility at Mountain Home, Johnson City; and

WHEREAS, as part of his job requirements, Arthur "Deacon" Bowers periodically conducts audits of 38 Veterans Outreach Specialists in employment field offices serving 55 counties in Tennessee; statewide, through October 2002, these offices provided counseling and training that led to gainful employment for 8,400 veterans, an accomplishment which is due in large part to Mr. Bowers' incomparable commitment to veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, indicative of the personal manner in which Arthur "Deacon" Bowers conducts his work, he regularly attends meetings of various veterans organizations across Tennessee and describes employment services available to them; and

WHEREAS, regarded as the "veterans' ombudsman," Mr. Bowers has also devoted a myriad of hours to serving veterans in a volunteer capacity; he was the manager of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Lynn H. Folsom Post 2166 in Elizabethton from 1968 to 1974 and, since September 2001, has served as Chairman of the Elizabethton-Carter County Veterans War Memorial Committee, which has raised approximately \$265,000 for the construction of a memorial to honor the 256 Carter County citizens killed in combat in Vietnam, while defending the freedoms enjoyed by all Americans; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his work with veterans' affairs, Arthur "Deacon" Bowers has enjoyed an illustrious career in the boxing ring; and

WHEREAS, shortly after completing his service in the U.S. Army, Mr. Bowers began training with the late Don Marshall, who became both his boxing coach and his mentor; and

WHEREAS, competing in the heavyweight division, Arthur "Deacon" Bowers won the Upper East Tennessee Golden Gloves boxing championship in 1958 and 1959; in 1958, he competed in the finals of the Southern Golden Gloves tournament, and in 1959, he was victorious at the Southern Golden Gloves tournament and advanced to the quarterfinals of the National Golden Gloves tournament in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, in his boxing zenith, Mr. Bowers was inducted into the Tennessee Boxing Hall of Fame, the Alabama Boxing Hall of Fame, and the Georgia Boxing Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, although he has now surrendered his gloves, Arthur "Deacon" Bowers still enjoys being in the ring, and since 1961, he has acted as a referee for the National Golden Gloves Boxing Association (which he has also served as President); he has officiated 30 bouts, 29 of which were nationally televised; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, Mr. Bowers was inducted into the National Organization of Golden Gloves Officials of America Hall of Fame; he is the first Tennessean to achieve this exalted level of distinction in the world of boxing; and

WHEREAS, his many professional accomplishments aside, Mr. Bowers is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife of 43 years, Carol Morgan, their children, Donna, Julie, and Paul, and their grandchildren, Sarah and Rachel Millsaps and Adam and William Presnell; and

WHEREAS, Arthur "Deacon" Bowers epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean, proclaiming that he is "proud to be an American and to be able to serve veterans and their families"; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Arthur "Deacon" Bowers for his dedication to the State of Tennessee and its many veterans; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we commend Arthur Byron "Deacon" Bowers for his enduring commitment to Tennessee's veterans and applaud his remarkable boxing career.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.